



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEXICAN POLICE CHIEF PLEADS GUILTY TO BRIBERY OF U.S. OFFICIAL

TUCSON—Sonoyta, Sonora, Mexico Chief of Police Ramon Robles-Cota, 32, pleaded guilty to bribery of a United States public official, in federal district court in Tucson on July 11.

Robles-Cota, had been charged with violating bribery and drug trafficking laws. At his change of plea hearing, Robles-Cota admitted the following facts:

In January 2005, a United States Border Patrol (USBP) agent reported that Sonoyta Mexico Police Chief Ramon Robles-Cota offered him money to assist a Mexican drug organization illegally import marijuana from Mexico into the United States. During the ensuing undercover investigation, the USBP agent met with Robles-Cota and recorded conversations with him discussing the bribe and marijuana importation. Robles-Cota said that the drug organization wanted to pass multiple vehicles through the international border near Meagers Dam, in the District of Arizona, on a frequent basis while the USBP agent kept the area free of American law enforcement and let the loaded vehicles pass. They agreed on a price of \$25,000 per vehicle the agent helped pass, and an advance of \$100,000 to the agent. On March 16, 2005, Robles-Cota met with the agent in Tucson, and gave him \$80,020 in cash and a radio for communications during the importation. Robles-Cota agreed to meet in Gila Bend, Arizona on March 23, 2005, to discuss further details of the importation and to provide the USBP agent with a different radio to use during the importation. On the way to the meeting, Robles-Cota's vehicle was stopped by law enforcement and he and his driver were arrested. Two radios, similar to the one he provided to the agent earlier, were discovered in his vehicle. The government could prove that the organization Robles-Cota brokered the bribe for had previously smuggled SUVs and trucks loaded with marijuana through the Meagers Dam area, and that the amount of marijuana in each vehicle was usually about 454 kilograms (1000 pounds) of marijuana.

A conviction for bribery carries a maximum penalty of 15 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Chief Judge John M. Roll will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Sentencing is set before Judge Roll on October 17, 2007. Robles-Cota's driver and co-defendant Julio Cesar Lozano-Lopez, was already sentenced before Judge Roll on June 8, 2006, to the 14 months and 21 days he had spent in federal custody at the time of his sentencing hearing.

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The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (DHS-OIG), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), partner agencies in the Southwest Border Corruption Task Force. The prosecution is being handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

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